

MEDIA RELEASE

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KGH Foundation Announces \$8 Million Campaign to Build JoeAnna's House

KELOWNA, BC – By the fall of 2019, Kelowna General Hospital will join the ranks of some of the most advanced health care facilities in the country when on-site, short-term accommodations will be available to families of patients travelling for specialized medical care.

Today, the KGH Foundation officially announced the Better Together campaign to raise the \$8 million necessary to open JoeAnna's House, an urgently needed home away from home to keep families together when they need it most.

"It's no longer the case that patients and children requiring advanced care are travelling to Vancouver, Calgary or Victoria," says Dr. Michael Ertel, a longstanding Emergency Department physician at KGH and Vice President of Medicine and Quality for Interior Health. "As the leading referral hospital for over 750,000 residents in the southern interior, at any given time, one in four beds at KGH is occupied by a patient from outside the Central Okanagan."

"I was told to pack my bags for two days," says Lisa Dear, a mother from Creston, whose newborn son Zacharias was transferred to KGH unexpectedly in the spring of 2016 at seven weeks premature. "I had no idea we would be in Kelowna for five weeks while Zach was in the NICU. Having JoeAnna's House would have meant the world to me and my family and would have alleviated so much of the hardship we experienced during that incredibly difficult time."

As Kelowna General continues to expand its capacity to provide advanced care in an increasing variety of medical specialties, housing the families of patients travelling for care has become a matter of growing concern.



Pictured from left: City of Kelowna Mayor Colin Basran; Lisa Dear; Dr. Michael Ertel, Kelowna General Hospital; Doug Rankmore, KGH Foundation.

“Finding accommodation for these families can be very challenging,” notes Gail Harrison, Past President and Grant Coordinator of Cops for Kids Charitable Foundation, an organization that has previously assisted in helping families like the Dears. “Hotel vacancies are at an all-time low, and often the financial burden without our assistance is simply too overwhelming.”

“We are thrilled to finally announce this campaign,” says KGH Foundation CEO, Doug Rankmore. “We know it will be a real barn-raiser in our community, and are so grateful to the Huber family and Prestige Hotels & Resorts for their leadership in initiating the project,” notes Rankmore, giving a nod to the Kelowna based Huber family, who committed \$1 million to support the construction of JoeAnna’s House in honor of their late parents, Josef and Anna Huber.

“Kelowna is a caring community that always pulls together in difficult times,” says Mayor Colin Basran. “I know we’re going to pull together for JoeAnna’s House so that families going through a difficult time have a sanctuary where they can be together when they need it the most.”

The KGH Foundation is an independent, volunteer-driven charitable organization committed to enhancing the delivery of healthcare to the patients of Kelowna General Hospital and its associated facilities.

Media Contacts:

Shauna Nyrose
Communications Officer
KGH Foundation
c| **250-801-0886 *text or call**
e| shauna.nyrose@interiorhealth.ca

Lindsay-Anne Dow
Communications Officer
KGH Foundation
e| Lindsay-anne.dow@interiorhealth.ca

BACKGROUND

- *JoeAnna's House* will be built on the corner of Royal Ave. and Abbott St.
- *JoeAnna's House* will be a home with approximately 20 rooms to house up to 20 families.
- A two year-long fundraising campaign by the KGH Foundation has now begun.
- Construction is expected to begin in October 2018 with completion ideally in fall of 2019.
- Currently, the land is used for staff parking. Interior Health is actively working on plans to relocate the parking spaces that will be impacted.
- For the past several years, Cops for Kids has been working with social workers at KGH to locate affordable short-term accommodation for families in need. This is becoming increasingly challenging, and nearly impossible in the summer months.
- The \$8 million campaign will cover all land, construction and initial costs of operating *JoeAnna's House*.
- The KGH Foundation will fund and operate *JoeAnna's House*.

THE JOEANNA'S HOUSE STORY

- *JoeAnna's House* is the culmination of vision and intention of the Huber family of Kelowna.
- The Huber family and Prestige Hotels & Resorts initiated the project, committing \$1 million to support the construction of *JoeAnna's House*, plus ongoing support of operational costs, in honour of their late parents.
- Josef (Joe) and Anna Huber moved to the Okanagan in the 1960's and eventually founded the family-owned and operated hospitality company known today as Prestige Hotels and Resorts.
- Joe Sr. and Anna were ultimately known for their legacy of kindness and giving. They had always taught the importance of giving back and the unparalleled value of a loving home.
- Their children, Ilse, Ingrid, Hilde, and Joe wished to honour their parents' legacy by building a home away from home for families when they need it most.
- With their giving spirit in mind, and to demonstrate kindness and caring for others, the Huber family is proud to honour Joe and Anna's legacy by partnering with the KGH Foundation to build *JoeAnna's House*.